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ABSTRACT

The rationale for the existence of developmental kindergarten classes is based on individual differences, the general importance of early childhood education, and the advantages of early detection of emotional disturbance and learning disabilities. The Waukegan program focuses on early identification and specification of problems, development of perceptual skills, creation and evaluation of techniques to increase school readiness, promotion of co-operative work between school personnel, specialists and parents, and the development of children's visual, motor and language skills. (DP)

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# DEVELOPMENTAL KINDERGARTEN CLASSES OF THE WAUKEGAN COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #60

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## RATIONALE

It has been stated that the only thing that kindergarten children have in common when they begin their public school experience is that they all arrive at school on the same day at the same time. Although this statement is exaggerated, it does illustrate the point that each child is a definite individual student with his own unique experience, background, homelife, learning styles, needs, and abilities. Effective educational programming must take into consideration all of these factors. It is most unfortunate and a waste of important human resources when children are "lumped" together into one curricular program just because they are of a similar chronological age. Instead, it is much more efficient to realize that children are different and have individual needs and abilities which fall at each point on the bell shaped curve.

Today, more than ever before, the public is aware of the importance of early education. The evidence is all around us - Sesame Street on T.V., private schools for early childhood education, big business ventures and interests in the young child, government and education agencies research and projects in early childhood education, the communication media stressing information and awareness of the importance of early childhood experiences, the medical profession stressing detection of problems of young children and preventive health planning, and the vast number of other professional persons of varied disciplines who urge early childhood opportunities. Included among this group of professional persons are the special education personnel who are most interested in early detection of problems of children and consequently, the application of developmental, corrective, and/or remediation services to aid the individual to develop to his fullest capabilities. Waiting until the child has failed is a waste of valuable time in helping the individual. Usually too, the difference of time between early detection and waiting until the child has failed results in the complicating of the problems of the individual through the addition of secondary factors as a result of the failure syndrome.

As a result of the development of the individual intelligence tests and the research which psychologists and other professional persons have conducted, it has been determined that about 13 percent of the population has IQs between 65 and 84 (dull normal), about 70 percent has IQs between 85 and 114 (average), and 13 percent has IQs between 115 and 134 (highly intelligent). At the extremes, about 2 percent has IQs below 64 (retarded) and another 2 percent has IQs about 135 (superior or gifted). It is also true that incidence studies have been conducted in the State of Illinois, and that as a result, incidence figures are available as a guide to Special Education departments in local school districts as an indication of estimating the approximate numbers of children for special education services in the different categories defined by law by the State of Illinois, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. In addition, the guidelines and law of the State of Illinois allow a local school district to identify and service young children who are in need of help, as young as age three.

A new book by Muriel Beadle, "A CHILD'S MIND: HOW CHILDREN LEARN DURING THE CRITICAL YEARS FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE," cites what many concerned professional persons are emphasizing today. Mrs. Beadle states that 50 percent of general intelligence is formed between conception and age 4,

30 percent between ages 4-8, and 20 percent between ages 8 and 17; that in vocabulary development, 33 percent is formed by age 6, 42 percent by age 13, and the remaining 25 percent by age 18; that the aggressiveness of males is 50 percent established by age 5 and the passivity of females is 50 percent established by age 4. No educator can overlook these crucial statistics and the implications they possess in important educational programming for young children.

In addition, in many children the developmental process has broken down; at one of the earlier stages, the child either failed to develop further or developed in an atypical or distorted manner. Such breakdowns in the developmental sequence may be the result of enviromental deprivations, injuries or defects in the organism, or emotional pressures with which the child has been unable to cope. Many of these breakdowns reveal themselves in the early elementary grades through difficulties in learning and low academic achievement. Interest has been growing in dealing with significant educational retardation by the process of early remediation and intervention, from a variety of rather disparate educational agencies. It has also been found that a majority of children having learning problems or both emotional and learning problems show significant difficulties in perceptual or motor skills. It can be hypothesized that mal-development, delayed development or non-development of basic motor skills in an individual leads to the inability to profit from the curricular offerings of the regular classroom of the public school. It is reasonable to assume that if we could identify those children who are more likely to develop significant learning retardation before it occurs and involve them in a developmental learning process that would prevent educational retardation, then we could prevent much emotional disturbance and later scholastic failure. The earlier the identification and intervention, the more effective.

The above factors, plus the experiences of working with the children in the bottom group of the Waukegan Early Evaluation Program (WEEP), and the follow-up of the children who were experiencing difficulty in kindergarten classes, and the awareness of the percentage of students in the first developmental kindergarten class who will be entering the special education program for the mentally retarded, all mandate the existence of developmental kindergarten classes.

# DEVELOPMENTAL KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

## OBJECTIVES

1. To serve as the Kindergarten class for placement of the children selected for the program as a result of city wide screening of the Kindergarten population of the Waukegan Community Unit District consistent with the procedures outlined in the analysis and follow-up of WEEP.

2. To serve as a method of early identification of problems of the children selected for the program through teacher observation, special curriculum, materials and techniques, and consequently through individual psychological testing in order to evaluate more specifically the types of disabilities these children present and to plan the most beneficial educational placement for the children.

3. To develop more adequate perceptual skills in the kindergarten children selected for the program.

4. To develop and evaluate techniques designed to increase school readiness for the children selected for the program.

5. To work cooperatively with school personnel, specialists and parents to develop understanding of the child and promote services and follow-up needed by the child to complement the school program.

6. To emphasize the development of visual skills, motor skills and language skills for all children selected for the program.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The teachers of the developmental kindergarten classes are staff members of the Department of Special Education. They must meet State certification requirements as teachers of Socially Maladjusted A Children with training in techniques, materials and methods for programming for children with learning disabilities. The teachers are staff members of the building where the classes are housed and must abide by procedures and policies of that building. The building principal is the immediate administrator to whom the teachers are responsible.

The Director of Special Education is the administrator responsible for the administration of the program in terms of personnel, transportation, testing and evaluation, placement, certification and meeting state requirements of the Department of Special Education, O.S.P.I., State of Illinois.

The Consultant for Special Education is responsible for curriculum, materials and instructional procedures for the developmental kindergarten classes. The Consultant is available on call at any time to assist the teachers in the program. The consultant will visit the classes at least once a month for the purpose of demonstration teaching, consultation with teachers, and/or conferences with the teachers regarding instruction, materials and curriculum.

The teachers are requested to attend building staff meetings, monthly kindergarten meetings, and are required to attend special education staff meetings for Socially Maladjusted B personnel. In addition, the teachers must attend psychological staffing for children enrolled in, and dropped from, or to be placed in the developmental class.

The developmental kindergarten classes will be in attendance one-half day each day the Unit District Schools are in session. The school day will begin and end consistent with policies and procedures of the Department of Special Education of the Unit District.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL CLASS PLACEMENT

1. Names of individuals who make the lowest city-wide individual scores on the total-test score will be determined as possible candidates for the Developmental Kindergarten classes.

2. Procedures for implementation of placement into this special class should consider the following items as guidelines:

   a. Conference with regular classroom teacher, principal, and psychologist of school to which child attends.

   b. Following the staffing above, the teacher and/or the principal arrange for initial contact with the parents stating that the child has been identified as needing some help to succeed in school and the following sequence of events is planned provided they are in a position to avail themselves of the special class placement.

      (1) Principal spells out the sequence of events to the parents.
      (2) Principal obtains parental permission to have psychological evaluation made of the child.
      (3) Principal determines parental ability to cooperate and to provide transportation to the special class when notified.
      (4) Principal arranges for special class placement via the Director of Special Education.
      (5) Principal makes out referral to Special Services for a psychological evaluation.

   c. Placement on the basis of W.E.E.P. testing and after the staffing and parent conference have been held is effected.

   d. Length of stay in special class is to be determined by psychological evaluation and recommendations which will be communicated to the parents via a conference with the psychologist following the evaluation.

   e. Staffing to include the Developmental Class teacher and principal, The Special Education Consultant, and other appropriate personnel as determined by current regulations.

3. An analysis by individual classroom teachers will determine whether a child is considered for special adjustment placement. It is anticipated than an analysis of the test findings will be presented to the kindergarten teachers of the district.

4. Names of the top ten city-wide individual total test scorers will be given to the Director of the Gifted program for her consideration.

REPORTS AND RECORDS

The developmental kindergarten teachers are required to adhere to record and report procedures consistent with the Unit District policies and procedures. They must begin enrollment cards, cumulative folders and other usual kindergarten records which are standard procedures of the District. In addition, the kindergarten teachers in the developmental program are responsible for following procedures and policies of the Department of Special Education of the District in the reporting of pupil attendance to the Special Education Office Secretary, in record keeping, in report compilation, and in conference procedures. Developmental kindergarten teachers are responsible for the following reports for the Department of Special Education:

1. A daily anecdotal log of pupil's performance, behaviors, successes, failures and other pertinent information.

2. A mid-year and end-of-year special report to the parents with a duplicate copy for the child's cumulative folder and the central office folder of the Department of Special Education which must be read by the Consultant for Special Education. (See attached Motor Training Handbook, pages 35-36)

3. An end-of-the-year summary report of the Department of Special Education which will be supplied to the teacher by the Consultant for Special Education. (See attached Motor Training Handbook, pages 33-34.)

4. The recording of WEEP test results and other test results in the child's cumulative folder. (WEEP tests are presently being field-tested in the Waukegan School District. Copies of the examination are not included in this text.)

5. The administration of the Metropolitan Readiness Test in the spring consistent with Unit District procedures and policies.

6. Protecting the confidential information in psychological reports which must be kept in the child's folder which must be kept in a locked file.

7. Holding two parent conferences per year: one at mid-year and one final conference after the individual psychological examination at the end of the school year.

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CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS OF THE PROGRAM

The emphasis of the curriculum must promote the development of language, visual, motor, perceptual (auditory, visual, tactile, kinesthetic, social) skills, listening skills, behavior modification, and social-mental health skills. The basis materials to promote the development of these skills will include the following:

LANGUAGE: Peabody Language Kit P and Speech and Language Improvement Program of the District. (See attached Motor Training Handbook for additional related activities.)

VISUAL: Daily training activities developed by the Consultant for Special Education. (See attached Motor Training Handbook -- Specifically page 37 -- for related activities and information.)

MOTOR: See attached Motor Training Handbook developed by the Consultant sor Special Education with assistance by the physical education staff member assigned to the total kindergarten motor training program.

PERCEPTUAL SKILLS: Frostig Program (Beginning) for the Development of Visual Perception. Suggested activities developed by the Consultant for Special Education, included in attached Motor Training Handbook (Specifically pages 28-30. Ginn, Games We Play, Kindergarten Fun; Lippincott, Readiness for Learning; McGraw-Hill, Developing Readiness for Learning. Teaching Resources materials, records, tape, concrete objects and games and junk objects.

CONCEPTUAL SKILLS: S.R.A. Red Book Learning to Think: Englemann, Concepts, games, stories, records, concrete objects.

LISTENING SKILLS: Story telling, sharing time, records, tapes, puppetry, and use of play telephone. Resource tool: Russell, Listening Aids Through the Grades; filmstrip, movies, games.

SOCIAL-MENTAL HEALTH SKILLS: Pictures, movies, filmstrips, books, free play opportunities, games, and simple directed teacher lesson.

Many supplementary materials are available on a loan basis from the Special Education Teaching Materials Center, West School. Audio-Visual aids and other library materials are available from the A-V Central Library at the Board of Education Office.

The daily schedule must include opportunities for sharing, free play, rest period and a snack time. It is suggested that the provision for the snack time be consistent with the policy of the kindergarten classes of the building where the developmental classes are housed, and that the developmental kindergarten teacher follow that policy in providing for a snack time in her class. It is further recommended that the arts and crafts activities and the music activities in the developmental classes be consistent with those recommended by the art and music directors of the Unit District. The teacher can make adjustments in the art and music activities as mandated by the abilities of her individual pupils. In general, the pupils in the developmental kindergarten classes should be able to profit from the suggested art and music axtivities. Additional suggestions may be obtained by consulting with the art and music directors of the district as well as the Consultant for Special Education and resources in the Special Education Teaching Materials Center.

Although specific materials are not included in the above list of materials for the development of recognition of the letters and the numerals as well as the ability to reproduce them accurately, it is suggested that the teachers:

1. Relate the shapes, lines to the configuration of the numerals and letters.

2. Develop the recopnition of letters and numerals through incidental teaching and manipulation of concrete objects and symbols through meaningful experience activities.

3. Develop the ability of the individual student to reproduce accurately the numerals and letter symbols through individual structured experiences using tactile-kinesthetic techniques and materials, color cues, and reproduction of symbols to patterns in game activities all consistent with the individual pupil's ability.

4. Develop the language association with the visual symbol.

## HELPFUL REMINDERS AS BASIC TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING THE CHILDREN

1. Make learning meaningful and fun . . . always involve each, individual student.

2. Give short, simple directions . . . a demonstration is much better than an explanation.

3. Be sure that each child participates simultaneously.

4. Praise builds up a child's self concept and provides a feeling of success which speeds learning.

5. Use as many sensory modalities as possible, if the child isn't learning a symbol by seeing or hearing it, have him feel it and make it kinesthetically.

6. If a task is too difficult, go back to an easier level.

7. Provide structure and be consistent.

8. When appropriate, emphasize up, down, front, back, in, out, over, under, forward, backward, horizontal, vertical, right, left, between, etc.

9. Involve left and right side separately, and both sides together in as many activities as possible.

10. Have children remove shoes for walking board, crawling, etc.

11. Use as many opportunities as possible to develop language and association of symbol and language.

12. Keep in mind at all times the attention span of the individual pupil.

13. Manipulation of concrete objects affords many children opportunities for experiences they might lack in developing perceptual and/or conceptual skills.

14. Remember the following general principles of learning in planning activities:

    A. Learning proceeds from the simple to the complex.
    B. Learning proceeds from the concrete to the abstract.

15. Don't assume that a child can do something or that he has mastered a developmental task appropriate for his chronological age . . . do preventive planning and teaching.